

THE MELFORD RURAL DISTRICT.

In the Administrative County of West Suffolk.

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health, for 1902.

Prepared in accordance with the Regulations of the Local Government Board and of the West Suffolk County Council.

Population 1891, 14456 ; 1901, 13121. Area, 49765 acres. Number of persons per acre, 0.27.

Number of inhabited houses, 13121. Number of persons per house, 4.1.

Geological formation, chalk, covered on the higher ground with Boulder Clay, and in the valleys with drift sand and gravel or brick earth. Superficially with alluvium.
Number of Parishes 21.

The following vital statistics have been compiled from the monthly returns sent to me from the different Registrars in the District :—

1. THE BIRTHS. The number of births registered during the year was 288 equivalent to a birth-rate of 21.8 per 1000 of the population. The births and birth-rates in this district during the past six years were :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.
Births	315	344	347	286	315	288
Birth-rate	21.8	23.7	24.0	19.7	23.8	21.8

THE DEATHS. The number of deaths from all causes registered during the year was 190, to which have to be added 16 deaths of persons belonging to the district in Sudbury Workhouse, making the total deaths 206, equivalent to a death-rate of 15.7 per 1000. The deaths and death-rate for the past six years were as follows :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.
Deaths registered	160	209	227	205	186	190
Deaths belonging to the District	174	229	246	221	200	206
Death rate	12.0	15.1	17.0	15.2	14.1	15.7

These tables show that the number of births in the district are below the average, but only to a slight extent. The death rate does not vary much from that of preceding years, though the deaths of old people from natural causes is greater. The following table shows the relative age mortality :—

Deaths	1 "	5 "	15 "	25 "	over "
Under 1	to 5	to 15	to 25	to 65	65
year.	years.	years.	years.	years.	years.
30	13	3	3	60	97

Infant Mortality. Owing to the absence of any severe zymotic disease among children the mortality is less than usual. The following is the record for the last six years :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.
Deaths of children under one year	35	49	40	34	27	30
Rate per 1000 of births registered	111.1	142.3	115.2	118.8	85.9	89.2

Deaths from Zymotic Diseases. These numbered 14, viz. : Whooping Cough 8, Diphtheria and Croup 2, Puerperal Fever 1, Influenza 3.

For the past six years the zymotic death rate was as follows :—

	1897.	1898.	1899.	1900.	1901.	1902.
	0.10	1.05	1.05	1.31	0.6	1.0

The deaths from Phthisis were 12, or 0.9 per 1000. The deaths from Cancer were 16, or 1.2 per 1000. This is about the average mortality from these two diseases in this district.

THE INFECTIOUS DISEASES NOTIFICATION. The total number of cases notified in the district during the year was 33 or 2.5 per 1000 of the population. The notifications for the past six years were as follows :—

	Smallpox.	Scarlet Fever.	Diphtheria and Croup.	Typhoid Fever.	Puerperal Fever.	Erysipelas.	Total cases.	Per thousand population.
1897	0	50	7	2	4	16	79	5.4
1898	0	30	8	2	2	14	56	3.8
1899	0	53	7	1 simple	3	19	83	5.7
1900	0	7	8	2	1.	15	33	2.2
1901	0	15	13	5 1 (cont.)	0	10	43	3.2
1902	0	16	5	1	1.	8 chkn pox 2	33	2.5

The following are particulars of the occurrence of these diseases :—

Small Pox. This disease did not occur ; though cases were occurring, at the beginning of the year, in very close proximity to the district ; in consequence of this much alarm was excited, and the District Council considered that steps should be taken to meet a possible invasion of the disease. Leaflets were distributed and notices put up in every parish urging the necessity of re-vaccination, and many persons availed themselves of this protection, which was done gratuitously by the public vaccinators. As there is no Isolation Hospital in the District arrangements were made so that a suitable hospital tent could be put up with little delay, if the necessity arose.

Scarlet Fever. There were sixteen cases of this disease notified, all were mild cases and none were fatal, they were spread over eleven parishes and occurred at different times of the year. Two of the cases were imported, the origin of the other cases could not be traced. The houses, twelve in number, were disinfected, and in no instance was there any spread of the disease from the families affected.

Diphtheria and Croup. Of the five cases notified two occurred in the parish of Acton. One of these terminated fatally, a child of nine months, before it was medically attended. The other recovered. The only and probable cause of infection, was one which I have observed in other cases, viz., that numerous fowls were kept in a confined space close to the house, which ground had thus been used for many years, so that the surface was thickly layered with hen excrement and food refuse, a condition of decomposing animal and vegetable matter, which highly favors the growth and development of the germs of diphtheria. In this instance the poultry was all removed and the ground put under cultivation.

It is an essential sanitary necessity, that where poultry is kept, as is the case in numerous cottage gardens, that the same ground should not be continually used year after year, as is being constantly done, frequent change is necessary, otherwise poultry keeping may become a source of disease instead of profit.

Two cases of Membranous Croup occurred in the parish of Cavendish, one fatal. The cottage, an old thatched one, was found to be unhealthy and dirty. Steps are being taken to report it as unfit for human habitation.

One slight and rather doubtful case of diphtheria occurred in the parish of Nayland. No sanitary defects were found on the premises.

Typhoid Fever. The only case which occurred during the year was in the parish of Great Cornard, and was that of a driver of a beer van, who went about the country. He often had to sleep out in the neighbouring villages, so that it was impossible to say where he contracted the disease. There was nothing wrong with the water or drains where he resided. The man recovered.

Whooping Cough. In a few parishes this disease was very prevalent in the beginning of the year, and eight deaths occurred. The parish of Gt. Cornard was the most affected, obliging the schools to be closed for a month, and was the subject of a special report.

Influenza. This was not so prevalent or so severe as in previous years, though early in the year typical cases occurred, and three deaths were due to this cause.

WATER SUPPLY. The deficient rainfall of the last few years was but little augmented this year, and most of the wells throughout the district have suffered in consequence from the still reduced stand of water, even to the extent of failing altogether in several instances.

In the parish of Hartest two new public wells have been sunk. One on the Green in place of an old well which had run dry, and the other on the Brockley Road, where a well had long been required.

Improved water supplies were carried out in Alpheton for twelve cottages, in Bures for one house. In Nayland Professor Living, of Cambridge, has further extended his generous supply to the village by opening a fountain in the middle of High Street. There are now three of these fountains always with a flow of good water.

Eight new private wells were sunk in connection with newly erected houses in various parts of the district.

Fifteen wells were cleaned out and the water improved thereby.

The parish of Shimpling suffers from a deficient supply of water. The well in the street, which is only a tank fed by land springs, failed completely during most of the summer. A proper well is required, and a constant supply of water could probably be obtained at a reasonable depth.

Nine samples of drinking water were analysed; of these two were so impure that the wells were closed. In three cases, though impure, the cleaning out and deepening of the wells rendered them wholesome. The remaining samples were all good.

SEWERS AND SEWERAGE. The privy cesspool is the general mode of dealing with sewage matter, and disposing of it on garden or allotment ground; pail collection is also in use to a slight extent. New sewers for a distance of 55 yds were made in the parish of Cavendish, and also for 130 yds were re-laid, in order to divert the flow of sewage from a large pond in the street, where it caused a nuisance. Blocked sewers were repaired and relaid in Melford and Alpheton. Three ditches conveying sewage were cleaned out in Melford; also one each in Bures, Lawshall, and Cavendish.

HOUSES AND DWELLINGS. Sixteen new houses were erected and inspected. Twelve houses were reported as unfit for human habitation; of these eight were closed and four were pulled down. One case of overcrowding occurred in Great Cornard, which was remedied by occupying the next house in addition. Two Gypsy vans camping in Little Waldingfield were found to be overcrowded; they immediately moved out of the district.

FACTORY AND WORKSHOPS. The factory and Workshop Act, 1901, came into force on January 1st this year, and imposes several new duties and powers on the District Councils and their Officers. These have mainly to do with the sanitation of Factories, Workshops, Workplaces, and also of out or home workers of certain kinds. It also imposes the duty of obliging all Factories and Workshops employing more than 40 people to have reasonable provision made in respect of safety from fire. Appended is a tabular report of the work done of which a Register is kept.

As the Public Health Acts Amended Act, 1890, is at present not adopted, closet accommodation is not referred to.

Of the three factories without proper means of escape from fire, one has now provided ladders and had the doors and windows made to facilitate exits; the others are in course of construction.

Workshops—50 in Register—have all been inspected. These include 12 Bakehouses, 4 Horsehair Weaving, 7 Builders and Carpenters, 4 Dressmaking, 2 Gut rope making, &c., &c. All were found to be in a satisfactory state, owing no doubt to there having been under the surveillance of H.M. Inspector. Only in four cases were improvements suggested.

Outworkers numbered 93; of these 49 were weavers of horse hair crinoline, and 44 were makers of clothes for a firm in Colchester, a list having been received from the Authorities there. The houses of all these outworkers were visited and found to be satisfactory.

The Dairies and Cowsheds, Bake-offices, and Slaughter-houses have been inspected and any defects to which attention was called were attended to and remedied.

GENERAL SANITATION. Systematic inspection has been made in each parish during the year, as well as special inspections when such were required. Annexed is a tabular statement referring to the work done in the several parishes of the District. No legal proceedings were taken during the year.

The District is still without an Isolation Hospital.

In the beginning of the year a Joint Committee was formed of the four District Councils, comprised in the Sudbury Union, for the purpose of considering the erection of an Isolation Hospital in a central position for the combined use of the Districts. Resolutions were passed in favour of this amalgamation and submitted to their respective Councils, where it failed to be unanimously carried.

This subject must again be brought forward as necessity arises.

Tabular statements, according to the forms supplied by the Local Government Board, of sickness and mortality within the districts are appended to the official reports, also a tabular statement according to the form required by the West Suffolk County Council.

J. SINCLAIR HOLDEN, M.D.

Medical Officer of Health.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR 1902.

GENERAL SANITATION.																								TOTAL
	Acton	Alpheton	Assington	Boxted	Bures St. Mary	Cavendish	Chilton	Great Cornard	Little Cornard	Hartest	Hawkedon	Lawshall	Leavenheath	Melford	Nayland with Wissington	Newton	Shimpling	Somerton	Stanstead	Stoke-by-Nayland	Great Waldingfield	Little Waldingfield		
Complaints Received	1	1	...	...	4	4	...	1	...	1	...	2	...	5	4	1	...	...	...	1	3	...	28
Nuisances Detected	22	7	2	1	68	26	1	18	7	7	5	15	1	54	30	5	...	2	4	3	22	3	303	
Nuisances abated after Notice served	12	1	1	...	55	20	...	13	1	5	1	11	1	21	29	3	...	...	2	...	16	3	195
Nuisances abated without Notice	10	6	1	1	13	6	...	4	6	2	4	3	...	27	1	2	...	2	1	2	6	...	96	
Slaughter Houses Inspected	...	...	1	...	2	3	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	4	2	...	...	...	...	1	2	...	17
Bakehouses Inspected	1	...	1	...	3	3	...	1	5	...	...	...	...	8	3	1	...	...	...	1	...	1	28
Dairies and Cowsheds Inspected	1	...	1	1	2	4	...	2	...	2	...	2	...	6	3	1	2	1	3	2	1	...	34	
Houses Newly Erected	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	9	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	16
Houses Disinfected	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	4
Houses Reported Unfit for Habitation	1	...	1	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	3	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	12
Houses Closed	1	...	1	...	...	4	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	8
Houses Pulled Down	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Filthy Houses Cleansed	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Premises Repaired	...	1	...	...	6	1	...	3	2	...	...	4	...	7	7	1	...	...	...	...	1	...	33
Premises overcrowded	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	3
Abated	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
Wells (New or Improved Supplies)	...	1	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	2	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	10
Wells (Cleaned out, deepened, &c.)	...	...	...	...	2	2	...	1	...	...	...	...	1	1	1	2	...	...	1	1	3	...	15
Samples of Water taken	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	2	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	9
Privies (New)	2	...	...	...	4	1	...	2	...	1	...	1	...	3	3	...	...	...	2	...	1	...	20
Privies (Repaired)	11	...	1	...	24	9	...	5	1	4	4	4	...	14	7	1	...	2	...	10	1	...	98	
Manure Pits, Urinals (New)	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Sewers (Relaid, repaired, &c.)	...	1	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4
Sink Pipes disconnected	...	...	...	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Drains (New)	...	1	...	1	4	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	4	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	13
Drains (Improved)	...	1	...	...	16	4	...	3	...	...	...	1	...	7	4	...	...	...	...	1	3	...	40
Ditches cleaned out	...	...	...	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	3	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	6
Animals improperly kept removed	5	...	...	...	2	1	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	10
Offensive Accumulations removed	3	2	...	...	2	...	...	2	3	...	...	2	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	19
Factories Reported without Fire Escapes	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	3
Factories Provided with Fire Escapes	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Workshops Inspected	1	1	1	...	3	3	...	1	1	2	...	3	...	21	7	...	1	...	...	4	1	...	50
Workshops Reported to Factory Inspector	1	1	1	...	1	1	...	1	1	...	...	...	...	7	...	...	1	...	...	1	...	...	16
Workshops complaints received from Factory Inspector	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	1
Workshops Nuisances abated	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	...	...	...	1	...	...	4
Outworkers Visited	1	9	27	40	11	5	93	
Outworkers reported to other Authorities	2	

FACTORY & WORKSHOPS ACT.																							
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FRANK HIGGINSON,

Inspector of Nuisances.

